

**Washington, D.C.** – When U.S. Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-8) attends a joint session of Congress Wednesday to hear President Bush's State of the Union address, she will be joined in the House gallery by Carmel High School sophomore Marshall Kious.

Bean invited Kious and his mother to Washington D.C. to attend the President's annual address to Congress after learning about a region-wide program they started to aid U.S. soldiers in Iraq and Kuwait.

Marshall Kious originally began the "Treats for Our Troops" collection drive to fulfill a class service project and to help his dad who is stationed in Kuwait as a Navy Seabee.

The program gathers and sends troops much-needed items that are either in short supply or are so expensive they are difficult for most soldiers to afford. Kious, his mother Debbie, and sister Julianne, eventually enlisted several north suburban businesses and civic groups to support the endeavor, which now operates from a shopping center storefront.

**"With his simple and creative approach to helping our nation's soldiers, Marshall Kious has touched our community and inspired the support of many businesses and families," Bean said, "Every American can look to the Kious family's efforts as an ideal demonstration of respect and honor for our fighting men and women. I am proud to recognize the Kious family's accomplishment by inviting them to attend one of our country's most important and revered ceremonies."**

Bean plans to approach the Department of Defense about the possibility of using Kious' "Treats for Troops" program as a prototype that can be utilized in more communities throughout the country.

###